

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St, Salem, OR

ATTENDEES

Participants: Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Julie Firman (ODFW), Ken Phippen (NOAA Fisheries), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Mark Meleason (ODF), Rich Szlemp (USFWS), Rod Kraemer (ODFW), Brian Pew (ODF), Josh Seeds (DEQ) – *by phone*

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF), Melissa Klungle (ICF), Randy Smith (ODF), Mike Wilson (ODF)

Facilitation Team: Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF), Deb Nudelman (Kearns & West), Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Deb Nudelman (Kearns & West) welcomed members. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

Deb reviewed the agenda, which includes: 1) Agency updates from Scoping Team (ST) members, 2) Report out on Steering Committee (SC) meeting and stakeholder outreach, 3) Review December 18 Terrestrial Strategy Expectations Meeting, 4) Update on Riparian Management Areas Handout, 5) Aquatic Data Processing and Validation, 6) Characterizing Riparian Areas, 7) Review HCP 2020 Schedule, 8) Confirm topics for SC update, and 9) Approach going forward, next steps, and summary.

Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF) reflected on the past ST meeting on December 3. At the last meeting, Gordon Reeves presented on the TerrainWorks modeling, and ST members provided direction on the aquatic strategy. The ST also reviewed the Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs), and reached consensus to provide the BGOs to the SC for review and feedback. The SC did come to agreement on the BGOs at the meeting, and Doug Cottam provided an additional edit to the BGOs that the team is reviewing.

Cindy also reflected on the December 18 terrestrial strategy meeting that included participation from terrestrial-focused ST members. The meeting was a chance to begin to develop the terrestrial strategy, discuss terrestrial conservation priorities, and align on the data utilized in the process. Future terrestrial-focused meetings will include full ST membership.

AGENCY UPDATES

Members provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon State Forests HCP process:

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF): 1) The agency is reviewing proposed timber sales through the Annual Operations Plan (AOP) process. The meetings are open if others would like to attend. The dates and locations of meetings are on the ODF website. 2) ODF will present the next two-year workplan at the Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting on January 8. The Board meeting will also include an update on the Linn County lawsuit.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW): ODFW has begun the process to reevaluate marbled murrelet up-listing. The Commission has decided to reopen the evaluation and update the science. The Commission is expected to make a decision in May.

NOAA Fisheries: The agency is still in the process of looking for a Branch chief.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ): The Willamette Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was rejected by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA has put out an alternative TMDL for comment.

REPORT OUT ON STEERING COMMITTEE AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Cindy provided an update on the December 6 SC meeting: At that meeting, NOAA Fisheries announced that NOAA Fisheries would be the lead for the NEPA process. The HCP project team provided an update on the conservation strategy. The SC provided feedback on the BGOs; they provided suggestions to make the language clearer and more consistent and approved the BGOs by consensus. Doug Cottam was not present at the meeting and had some clarifying edits after the December 6 SC meeting. The SC also reviewed the HCP schedule for 2020, including the BOF meetings in 2020 that include an HCP component.

Deb noted that several stakeholder meetings occurred in December 2019. The HCP project team met with conservation stakeholders, recreation stakeholders, and State Forests Advisory Committee (SFAC) members to learn about their interests as they relate to the HCP. Members of the conservation community provided maps for consideration, and the ODF team is working on incorporating these. The project team is also in the process of scheduling a meeting with industry stakeholders. The intent of these meetings is to gather information from stakeholders about what they would like considered in the development of the conservation strategy and actions.

Nick Pallazotto (ODF) noted that the Oregon Garden Club has reached out and expressed interest in engaging in the HCP process. The HCP team is also planning to engage with the Collaboration on Biological Diversity (CBD) moving forward.

A ST member suggested including the representatives of the Coho Business Plan (strategic action plans) in the engagement process.

A member asked whether the SFAC publicly addresses the Board at BOF meetings? ODF responded that the SFAC is focused on implementation rather than policy, so they tend not to engage with the BOF as a body. Individual SFAC members, however, have addressed the Board outside of the SFAC.

REVIEW DECEMBER 18 TERRESTRIAL STRATEGY EXPECTATIONS MEETING

Troy Rahmig (ICF) provided an overview of outcomes from the December 18 ST meeting on the terrestrial strategy. The meeting focused on walking through the data being used for the species and included a discussion on how the data is being used and whether additional data should be considered. The group also discussed sequencing of how to talk about species. The meeting ended with a workplan for how to synthesize the data, which will be done during subsequent terrestrial-focused ST meetings.

Mike Wilson (ODF) noted that there is some work being done to find additional data on torrent salamander.

Troy then framed up the conversation for today. At the December ST meeting, members had some questions and information requests; today, the team will report out on responses to questions and data requests, although there is still some work in progress. Some work still needs to be done on wood recruitment modeling in response to ST comments from the December meeting. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT AREAS

Troy reviewed a draft riparian management areas handout. He noted that the ST provided great input at a previous meeting, and this input has been incorporated. Troy and Melissa Klungle (ICF) reviewed the changes to the document. The changes included:

- Additional definitions for clarity.
- Removed the distinction between salmon and non-salmon streams. Members noted that the Forest Practices Rule makes a distinction between the two, so it may be worth making that distinction in the HCP, for consistency.
- No changes to the values.
- Organizational changes to better connect the tables to the figures.
- Made terminology more consistent and accurate. (For example, using the term “equipment restriction” rather than “equipment exclusion.”)
- Added additional labels to the figures to make the figures more useful and to indicate buffer changes.

- Added a new figure, Figure 4, that shows the riparian management strategy for seasonal streams.

Discussion:

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:

- Does Figure 1 clarify where we are starting from?
- Some limited activities are permissible in the buffer area. Are the activities that can happen in buffer areas the same across all buffers?
 - Yes, the same kinds of activities are permissible regardless of stream types.
- Clarification that it would still be permissible to have variances or exceptions when a road must be built, and the only way to build it is across an intermittent stream.
- Clarification about what occurs in the transition zones where buffer widths change.
 - The HCP may clarify what happens with certain eventualities. The HCP will provide a framework for decision making when there is a need to deal with eventualities, and how to make exceptions and variances.
 - The effects analysis will help provide clarity; there will be some activities that occur everywhere.
- For potential debris flow track initiation points (Figure 3), many of those points are outside of the seasonal Type N. Suggestion to explain or illustrate this to add clarity and to show that sometimes the points are above the system.
- A lot of streams in Western Oregon forests end in debris tracks and there are not many small perennial Type N streams. A very small part of the watershed fits into that stream type.
- Is important to buffer enough on small perennial Type N streams to improve water temperature.
- Would like to have more temperature data and use that in conjunction with the effects analysis in collaboration with ODF and NOAA Fisheries. That way, the effects analysis incorporates the most up to date data and is based on what is happening on the ground. Suggestion to have the agencies meet collaboratively to interpret the data, and then write the effects analysis.
 - Suggest the SC also be briefed on how the ST is interpreting the data and developing the effects analysis.
 - Suggest that Julie, Jim, and Mark get together to start doing the work of looking through the data and beginning the conversation. Suggestion that

ICF and a notetaker also be engaged in the meeting(s) to be able to track the conversation and bring it back to the full ST for consideration.

- Will you be able to describe or quantify the areas that, in the majority of cases, will have trees standing in most of the landscape and will not be a hard buffer, so that there will be an additional benefit? The forest is not going to be cut all the way to the edge of the buffer. Suggest describing that, so that the public understands that the actual landscape will not look like clear-cut forest next to forested buffer areas.
 - ODF noted that much of the land will not be available for clear-cutting, and much of the forest will be in rotation; agree that this can be better described in the HCP.
- Figure 3 should be updated to reflect a buffer under the lower small perennial Type F. Where stream transitions occur other than confluences (as specified in Figure 1), does the buffer apply?
 - Mark Meleason (ODF) offered that he would write up a blurb to explain how high debris flow and high energy streams are identified to inform the buffering strategy.
 - In some cases, the tributary provides the cold water that fish need, while the main stream is often too warm. Those tributary streams should be buffered to keep lower water temperatures.
 - It was clarified that it is sometimes necessary to have additional buffer in order to mediate temperature. Mark is working on diagrams of this situation.

Troy summarized the next steps:

- There are no major revisions to the handout based on today's conversation. We can continue to work on the handout at later meetings.
- The HCP project team will have follow-up discussions regarding the data.

AQUATIC DATA PROCESSING AND VALIDATION

Troy noted that the ODF and ICF team have been working to reconcile data sets and respond to the data requests of ST members. The intent is to develop one reconciled set of data that includes TerrainWorks data combined with ODF on-the-ground data that will be used for the HCP process.

Mike presented an overview of data processing and validation. Key points of the presentation included:

- There is some discrepancy in the line work of the TerrainWorks synthetic channels data and ODF data, so the team worked to conflate the data sets.

- Showed a snapshot of the line work and explained the process to get there.
- Proposed using ODF fish and perenniality calls layered on top of the TerrainWorks data. It is anticipated that there will be issues in the line work for seasonal streams that are non-fish verified, and unknown areas that have not yet been evaluated. We will have to figure out how to more generally characterize these and estimate the effects.
- TerrainWorks has debris flow torrents in their data, and the ODF team will be looking at that component.

Discussion:

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:

- A member asked why the density of line work varies throughout the figure.
- The TerrainWorks model and ODF data have different assessments of how many stream miles are used by fish. How is ODF addressing this?
 - Mark noted that the TerrainWorks results came from modeling but might not match with on-the-ground survey work. There is a lot of on-the-ground data that ODF is also considering, which is often a better picture of what is really happening.
 - ODF noted that for the areas that have been surveyed, there are not many places where the modeling found fish-bearing streams where the ODF data did not find fish-bearing streams.
 - Troy reminded the group that the information presented today is for analysis purposes, but that on-the-ground implementation of the HCP would include additional analysis to ensure that streams are properly characterized.
- Clarification that fish streams include both seasonal fish streams and perennial fish streams. There are very few seasonal fish streams.

CHARACTERIZING RIPARIAN AREAS

Stream Data and Stream Typing:

Troy explained that we want to begin discussing how to characterize the stream network and types of streams.

Mark provided a summary of stream network data and the approach used to type streams. He noted that there are over 8,000 miles of stream in the Plan Area. He presented graphs and tables showing stream type by district. 17% of streams are fish-bearing, 23% are non-fish-bearing, and the remainder are seasonal streams. A very small proportion of seasonal streams are fish-bearing.

Troy noted that in the effects analysis, there is the ability to consider buffer strategies for the streams by stream type. An important next step would be to characterize potential risks and benefits to species.

Discussion:

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:

- Some streams may be non-fish bearing because the water is too warm due to past land use. Where the fish can venture in the future can change. The HCP permit term is decades long. Suggest clarifying whether the potential exists to demarcate boundaries of stream type based on new information or changes in land use in the future.
 - ODF clarified that the methodology we use for type streams is based on habitat, not on whether we actually see fish. For example, we ask whether the habitat would support fish at any point in the year, rather than looking at whether fish actually exist in the stream.

Riparian Habitat Conditions:

Mark provided a summary of where commercial thinning could be used to improve riparian habitat condition. Key points of the conversation included:

- Conifer dominated small and medium areas are stands that might benefit from thinning activities. There is also opportunity to promote structure to achieve mature forest conditions.
- Forest types vary among districts. For example, Tillamook District includes a lot of hardwood dominated areas, whereas Astoria District has many conifer-dominated areas. West Oregon district has the most significant portion of small and medium conifer dominated forest that intersects with perennial stream miles.

Discussion:

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:

- Question about whether it would be possible to get numbers on alder management and areas where hardwood conversion could be supported. This question will be revisited at a later time.
- There may need to be variances on what we are proposing to accommodate unique situations.
- Consider doing a percent of HUC.
- Question about whether the conifer dominated small/medium areas would be open to commercial operations.

- ODF responded that the objective would be different for a riparian area as compared to the stand at large. The riparian area objective would be for promoting a mature forest condition along perennial streams. A member noted that in the BLM process, one option taken was to ban commercial operation in certain areas.

Valley Width Analysis:

Melissa presented an overview of the valley width analysis, using Cook Creek as an example. Key points of the presentation included:

- Data can be used to identify areas that have high intrinsic potential for coho. Coho use unconstrained areas more often. The ODF-ICF team applied a valley width analysis to the Cook Creek Watershed. A figure shows where high coho potential exists. Other attributes can be layered onto the figure.
- There is opportunity to look for in-stream mitigation opportunities.
- If there is a place where we want to look for opportunities to do restoration in the watershed, the valley width analysis can be used to try to select the best restoration projects with the highest potential.

Next Steps:

Troy reviewed the next steps and additional data gathering and analysis needed. This included:

- Wood recruitment modeling.
- Seasonal streams analysis: characterizing stream types (particularly seasonal other streams).
- Discuss difference between best management practices and management direction and what might happen in management areas.
- Additional climate change analysis.
- Analysis of leverage length of debris flow tracks.

CONFIRM TOPICS FOR STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The next SC meeting is scheduled for January 23. Members did not provide specific messages to communicate.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY

Deb thanked members for their participation.

- The next ST meetings are scheduled for the following dates:
 - Tuesday, January 28 (terrestrial focused)
 - Tuesday, February 4 (aquatic focused)
 - Tuesday, February 25 (terrestrial focused)

Cindy noted that next steps include:

- Discuss temperature data and how it is applied. The project team may try to schedule a meeting prior to next ST meetings to discuss this topic.
- Clarify ODF's understanding on the application of a buffer in high debris flow areas and discuss this as a group.
- Discuss best management practices and ensure that terminology is in alignment. May try to do some of that outside of the ST to be able to talk to the ST about this as a group without having to focus on getting the terminology right.
- If there are changes to the BGOs, we will likely send those to the ST by email for final confirmation.

ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- Include the representatives of the Coho Business Plan (strategic action plans) in the stakeholder engagement process.
- Obtain more temperature data and use that in conjunction with the effects analysis.
 - Julie, Jim, and Mark – Review temperature data and begin conversations. ICF and a notetaker should also attend the meeting(s) to be able to track the conversation and bring it back to the full ST for consideration.
- Mark – Write up a blurb to explain where the buffer applies.